

Grace Line

The Metaxoi Memorandum

To Those Who Will Rule with Jesus in the World to Come

March 2010: Volume II

Greetings,

I hope this letter finds you engaged in and enjoying the ministry that the Lord has given unto you. I hope also that you are being diligent to cut straight the Word of God to those who have been entrusted to your teaching and leadership.

The Lord has given me many good opportunities at the seminary and in the larger Christian arena over the past three months. You can read more about that on <http://www.GraceLine.net>. But the *Metaxoi Memorandum* is for you men and women who are on the front lines of ministry and hence in the cross hairs of the evil one who would like to hinder if not harm your ministry. To this end the *Memo* is meant to provide you with education and encouragement to “*fight the good fight, run the race, and keep the faith.*”

Most of you are in positions of church leadership. You have been theologically trained and given the great privilege of serving the Lord in a variety of capacities and localities. Now, I wish to share a bit of my heart to you and in a way, my concern..... As the doctor says as he prepares to do some procedure on you-----“*you might feel a little pressure.*”

Having been in the professional ministry for the past 35 years as a pastor, a para-church leader and now a professor; I have seen a great deal of change over the years. I have also seen a lot of activity but not as much maturity as I would have wished in the body of Christ. The net/net effectiveness of the Church could be described as “*under performing.*” Don’t get me wrong, many good ministries have come about and many people have come to Christ. However, as I observe the church today in our country, as well as in the world, the impact is at best confusing. This is partially because the church is confused as to what is the content of the gospel. Also, the purpose of the pastor has become confused, which accounts for so much *hoopla* in our churches. (*Hoopla* is a Greek technical term as you know.)

I know that the cry of the day is to be relevant. But if you want to always be relevant then you must say things that are eternal. If you do so then you will be eternally relevant. Therefore, sound

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biblical doctrine is the answer. However, even for many who do teach the Bible it is often done at such a low or superficial level that people are in fact unprepared. However, they think they are getting the good stuff, but in fact it is shallow if not banal, and sometimes only half truth teaching that impresses them but does not genuinely impact or infect them for real change.

I know some of you would say - "Listen Fred, you have not been a pastor for a while and besides you are too old." Well, I am getting up there in age I agree, but I preach every week and counsel every week and teach every week in the church. In fact, I get to do these things often at a variety of churches. So, I do not think that I am out of touch with the people of the day, and I know that the depth of the Word does not bore people, but in fact inspires them. So, my plea to you is for self examination of your teaching ministry.

- ▶ Have you lowered the bar?
- ▶ Have you justified this lowering based on the need to be relevant?
- ▶ Are you seeing disciples grow in their understanding of the Word and doctrine so as to be protected from the theological wolves of this world?
- ▶ Are you putting in the hours of study and prayer needed to produce top flight sermons?
- ▶ Are you discipling men regularly - right now sharing your knowledge, wisdom, and life?

I do not mean this to be a word of condemnation, but a word of exhortation, challenging you to seek the Lord for a time of examination and evaluation. Remember, your job is to lead, feed, and protect the people of God. The Lord has given us His Scripture and Spirit to accomplish this with the saints. One day we will all be held to account (James 3, II Cor. 5:9-10). So, in one sense you preach to an audience of ONE. And so I speak to you, not what you want to hear, but things that one day you will have wished you would have heard. Hence, I know you actually do want to hear.

Resources

Let me introduce you to some new resources. Unfortunately, they are mainly more from the Lordship camp, but it is essential that we be aware so that we can beware of the dangers out there.

First, a new commentary on *James* has come out recently. It is in the *Baker Exegetical Commentary* series, Baker Publishing, 2010, written by Dan G. McCartney. He is professor of New Testament at Redeemer Seminary in Dallas, which was formerly a satellite of Westminster Seminary. He received his Ph.D. from Westminster, so that is a clue of what you are in store for in the book.

This is the latest reformed commentary on James. It covers all the bases in terms of rehashing the same old ground on James. It is a good resource if you do not have much else from this side of the debate. It is exegetical but inserts many theological assumptions. It is fully indexed including an index of Greek terms. The bibliography is very strong, although he manages to miss any commentaries and almost all articles from a grace perspective.

Now to the issue - James 2:14-26. The good news: He lists all of the options even though he does not interact much with them. He also sites major representatives of each view. However, in his sighting of Zane Hodges' view he gives a few lines of definition and then discards it in two lines with little interaction or evidence for his conclusions. In fact, there is only one reference to Hodges' article of 1963, and not a mention of the commentary he wrote. Also, there is no mention of the series of articles in JETS by John Macarthur and Earl Radmacher concerning this issue or other articles by John Hart, Bob Wilkin and John Niemela. Hence, the commentary is woefully incomplete on this, the most important section of the book. He does site Paul Rainbow, but not the other latest entries to the debate of those who redefine faith to mean faithfulness and dress James up as a modified catholic. So is it worth \$25.00? If you have little in your library on James it is worth having just to have the latest work on James from the other side of the theological game.

Turning now to the Book of Hebrews: As you know this is one of my favorite books and a namesake of the title of this newsletter "Metaxoi". This latest in the *Pillar Commentary Series* is a fine reformed work on *Hebrews*, Eerdmans, 2010 by Peter O'Brien of Australia. This work is a very complete commentary. It is up to date with the secondary literature. It is not as massive as the 2 volumes of William Lane in Word Commentary (Arminian) or Ellingsworth (who knows?) in the Greek New Testament Commentary series. Nonetheless, it is a 500 page reformed document under the editorial guidance of D.A. Carson so you can guess how it comes out. It is exegetical, but reveals much theological bias. There is no mention of Hodges. However, there is one citing of Randy Gleason and three of Kem Olberholtzer (both who mainly follow Hodges) but their views are only briefly revealed and summarily rejected. There is no mention of Jody Dillow, G.H. Lang, Robert Govett, Eric Sauer or any others who articulate a free grace perspective. It is a good resource for the typical reformed view expressed with good exegetical detail. Even if you have Lane or Ellingsworth you might want to buy this since it gives the latest take from the reformed view and does interact with much of the scholarly secondary literature.

One other work that has recently come out on Hebrews is *The Epistle of the Hebrews and Christian Theology* edited by Richard Bauckham et.al, Eerdmans, 2009. This is a series of papers first presented in 2006 at Saint Andrews University in Scotland. They have been reworked and edited for publication. The highlight is I. H. Marshall in his essay on *Soteriology in Hebrews*. He holds to eternal insecurity as do some of the other authors, but the essays are fine tuned on selected, narrow topics so they do not overlap. The essays are highly scholarly. So, unless you plan on spending a long time to dig out some nuggets that may not preach well, then this is not for you. In the better commentaries you can get some of the material, but the specificity of the essays provides unique material and often times individualistic views on the topics at hand.

Let me introduce you to a book that is Lordship on steroids. It is called *Crazy Love*. A friend of mine wrote a full blown review of the book. I have provided a link to the Grace Line web site that will allow you to read the review in its entirety. [click here](#) or <http://www.GraceLine.net>

Finally, a book I can recommend 100%. Dr. Dave Anderson of Grace School of Theology has just published his notes for a class he teaches on Soteriology at the school. It is self published by Xulon Press. Hardback is \$30.00, paper is \$20.00. (But I hear you can get it on Amazon.com out the door for \$21.00 hardback.) It is called *Free Grace Soteriology*. No mystery about this one.

These are his classroom notes. He provides good end notes, but not as full as I would like. There are sections of bibliography not as complete as I would have expected. But there is more than enough to keep you studying. The text is a good balance of exegetical nuance, theological implication, and historical theology to illustrate and validate key issues.

The three strands together form a strong bond and a great read. If you had me for Soteriology class you will notice many similar arguments and conclusions. Much of the work follows the traditional "Hodges" view and exegesis without the divergence on the cross-less issue. This is a great textbook and a fantastic tool for training elders and leaders of the church.

If you have not had a chance to read, *The Faith That Saves: [The Nature of Faith in the New Testament](#)*, I encourage you to buy a copy and see the detailed, in depth, exegetical arguments for the specific scriptures that are so often misinterpreted. Also the booklet, *[The Glorious Grace of God: Understanding Free Grace Theology](#)* is a great tool for you to share with your church leaders and members. It was written specifically at the layman's level to encourage a better understanding of Free Grace Theology among a broader group of people. Order through Grace Line.

In closing, let me remind and invite you to come to the April 24th, fourth annual Grace Line Spiritual Life Conference. This year's theme is, ***Growing Strong in the Christian Life***. Speakers include, Dr. Dave Anderson, President of Grace School of Theology and Dr. Charlie Bing from Dallas, Pastor Bob Kerrey, who is one of the finest expository preachers in Phoenix, Dr. Jim Bull, Senior pastor of Palmcroft Baptist Church, which is the second largest free grace church in Arizona and my self. It will be a great opportunity for you and many of the people who are under your ministry to enjoy great Bible teaching and a fun time of fellowship with likeminded believers. We will have a great book display and we also will be videoing the conference.

Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling and provide beyond all that you can ask or think - To Him be Glory and Dominion forever and ever.

Serving Him with you
Until He comes for us,

Fred Chay, Ph.D.
President, Grace Line

Grace Line Spiritual Life Conference

"Growing Strong in the Christian Life"

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Saturday, April 24, 2010

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 pm

(lunch included)

Palmcroft Baptist Church

15825 N. 35th Ave

Glendale, AZ

Cost - \$15
students - \$10

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Register by Emailing - gracelineministry@cox.net

Complete registration and Conference details can be found at www.GraceLine.net

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